

why I would like you to consider this as a proposal to this bill. LB 633 is a bill that is before us as a means of clarifying some of the problems that developed with the writing of LB 994 last year. 994 was a very comprehensive bill. It was Nebraska's answer to the quality of education issues, crisis in...nation in crisis issues, that were raised throughout the United States as a result of many of the studies done in public education. It did an awful lot of good things. It made an awful lot of changes in education that will make our schools in the state hopefully much, much better places to send our young people and improve the quality of education that they receive. LB 633 does a number of changes in that. One of the things it does, is it delays in a lot of places implementation dates of things that we did last year. The Education Committee in its wisdom felt that a number of those changes that we dictated last year just were not able to be complied with within one year. What I am asking you to do is to consider adding this mandated number of hours in a school year as one of those items that we can delay without destroying the quality of education that we were striving for in LB 994. Let me explain to you some of the problems that are being created out within the state as we strive to implement this 1,080 hour requirement. Actually it is 1032 instructional hours for elementary schools and 1,080 hours for high school students. The manner in which the Department of Education chose to implement this was basically to publish in their rules, Rules 14 and 15, the statement, reiterate the statement in the law here and then mandate that each individual school board provide the policy...state the policy as to how it would be implemented. In other words, the state would set the standard but you on the local level determine what it means to you, an attempt at balancing state mandates and local controls. What is happening is that different school boards throughout the state are choosing to interpret this in a different fashion. One of the things that has got a lot of publicity in the newspapers and the sports page is what we do about release time for athletic events. Is that totally eliminated? Do we have to bring it back within reason or can we basically dismiss school for athletic events? That is only one of the problems that we have had in implementation of this. One of the real problems, and the reason I am bringing this for you is a number of school district school boards have decided unilaterally that in order to meet the mandates of this 1,080 hours, they must do things like increase teacher